

NEW PEAS GRAVE AND GAY BY ACTORS BIG AND LITCE.

Liliputians in "The Fair in Midgettown" at The Star.

Somehow, perhaps the paying public know why the Liliputians always draw in New York. Whether they are in the fashionable part of up-town, or in the melodramatic atmosphere of the Star and its environs, the Liliputians get a house, and the kind of a house which is over-fond of curtain calls and encores and all the demonstrations of approval which mean success.

The little band of merry folk opened at the Star last night in a new thing called the "Fair in Midgettown." Not that the fair appears in the piece in more than a passing reference, but there were intentions of a fair, and upon the intentions is built a title for this accumulation from the pen of Robert Breitenbach.

The piece is obvious. It was, of course, done to fit, as a tailor would say, an overcoat to fit the peculiar people who are to wear it. It is done for Franz Ebert and his associates, and they have got into the spirit of it in the "cunning" way characteristic of them. The ladies call it "cunning," so that must be the word.

"The Fair in Midgettown" tells how there is a sick daughter in a New York family of wealth, and the solicitous parents want to cure her, after the manner of solicitous pa-

at both. You also see Miss Selma Goerner as a dairymaid and are glad to meet her. Then you know why all those people are out in front and for what they have been waiting. If the author had wished to construct a new melodramatic mystery he could not have done better than to start off with that town house, with the name of the Liliputians on the programme.

However, once the story is made clear and the real actors get the stage, they amuse you. Franz Ebert, with his comical batting of the eyes and his good delivery of German, is always funny, whether the part be that of a no. He had "Soap," the barber, the fat of the land and a few amorous adventures, they are taken back on another drunk to their original setting in Midgettown, and awakened to the bitterness of the old life.

And there you are. That is the whole story in brief. Of course, there are some love affairs of minor importance, but they matter not. It is the old dream idea worked into the Liliputian capacity. That is all.

Ebert is accustomed to having a show to himself. Last night he had to split with Miss Jaeger, the barber. Her part was



rents. She is small of stature and she knows and regrets it. The family physician is called in, and he advises a change of air after the manner of family physicians who know nothing else. He suggests an interior town somewhere on earth where all the folks are as small as this German countess, and thither the family go.

Then you discover the Liliputians. All this time the growing-up people have been dreamily talking and walking and waving their important arms, you are wondering when the show is to begin, and you find out when the grown folks get to Midgettown.

Once within the confines of this remarkable village, you begin to enjoy yourself. That town house of the anxious parents was inexpressibly dull. You discover Franz Ebert as a bartender, and Miss Bertha Jaeger as a barber, and you are pleased

good, and she made a hit with it. She was vivacious, active, insistent. She got quite as much out of the big audience as the actor himself, and she got it legitimately in the acting of a male part. Her work when she discovered that she was a miller's daughter was more effective than that of a true-born and tried actor. Miss Goerner as the dairymaid, with whom "Soap" was in love, deserves something of praise.

The music was not good. Victor Hollander did it. But he went round town and picked up all the "coon" melodies and popular things which obtain in the farces, and he forced them into a chorus, and they just made one think of the hand-organ outside one's window, when one is trying to sleep late mornings.

A New "Girl from Paris."

The inhabitants of Boston are to be congratulated. "The Girl from Paris," with whom Manager E. E. Rice will endeavor to subjugate their beginning one week from last night, is really an engaging creature—almost the double of the one who lavished her seductions on this community upon nearly three hundred separate occasions.

Her name is Georgia Calne, and she is one of a completely new cast first seen last night at the Herald Square Theatre. While she was engaged in hypnotizing a large audience of New Yorkers, Clara Lipman was performing the same operation on a houseful of fortunate Philadelphians.

Miss Anna Buckley need not feel injured at the statement that Josephine Hall is missed. That young woman is another deserter in favor of the Philadelphians, who certainly will profit by her ministrations. There never can be quite such another sister Mary Jane's top note as Josephine Hall's.

Louis Mann is also doing missionary service among the Quakers, who, if they do not at once see the huge of the custom-made musical spring, will gradually learn why "it is to laugh," as they have learned other things slowly and painfully, but surely.

The Wilson sisters and their bicycle girl companions, "Jo," and all the other old favorites have gone over to the Philadelphians. But the Bostonians, ignorant of what they are missing, will be serenely grateful for the new "Girl from Paris," who will doubtless grow upon them as the old one grew upon New Yorkers.

Opera at the Ice Palace.

A season of opera began last evening at the Ice Palace with the production of Auber's opera "Fra Diavolo," which was charmingly rendered by a competent company headed by Payne Clark and Ada Palmer Walker. During the season this company will appear in a repertoire of grand opera, and judging from the large, appreciative audience last evening opera appears at popular prices promises to be very successful.

Thomas Shea at the Grand.

Never in the history of the Grand Opera House, which has held many immense audiences, has so large a crowd of spectators gathered within its walls as that which assembled last night to greet Thomas E. Shea in his new American naval play "The Man-of-War's Man." So great was the throng clamoring for admittance that Managers Piron and Brennan sent for an extra detail of policemen to preserve order.

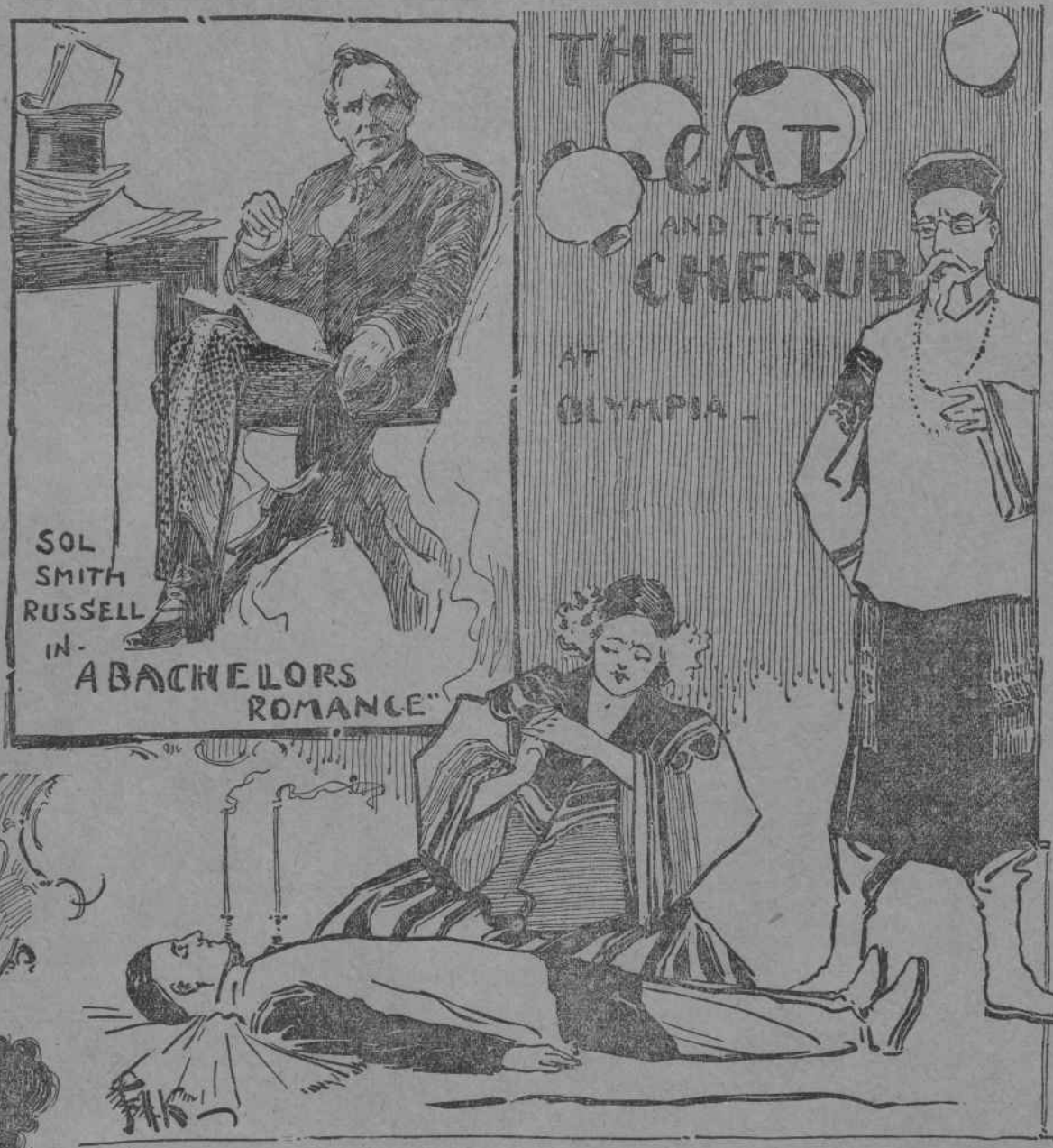
On account of the crowd the curtain was delayed nearly half an hour, and finally rose on a handsomely decorated scene representing the Army and Navy Club of this city. The action of the play proceeded thence to Honolulu, Russia and Cuba, whirling up with a realistic naval battle at Nicaragua. In this sea conflict the auditors beheld an American and Spanish vessel engaged in an exciting marine action, with the necessary adjuncts of booming of cannon, dashes of light from the guns and the crippling of the warring of both vessels.

Mr. Shea scored an undeniable hit as Captain Conway. He has only been seen once before in this city, and it is safe to predict that after his success of last evening he will be a regular and welcome visitor to New York. His style is earnest, forceful and intelligent. Possessed of a degree of magnetism that few actors on the stage can equal, he had no difficulty whatever in winning his audience the moment he stepped upon the stage, and holding their attention until the final fall of the curtain.

Mr. Shea's support was competent throughout, and especially his were those of Henry Test, Frank Bowman, J. E. Gilbert, Miss Louise Brooks and Miss Rose Adelle.

"Prince Rudolph" a Success.

Chicago, Sept. 20.—Otis Skinner produced his new romantic comedy, "Prince Rudolph," at the Grand Opera House last evening. The play is prettily mounted, the costuming being especially handsome and effective. The story, which is a free adaptation of one of Robert Louis Stevenson's earlier works, is well told, with situations and climaxes highly dramatic. Mr. Skinner scored a success in the title role, and the supporting company shared the honors.



Sol Smith Russell in Martha Morton's Comedy, "A Bachelor's Romance," at the Garden.

By Alan Dale.

Sol Smith Russell, an actor with profitable and popular eccentricities of manner, relied upon a feminine tailor at the Garden Theatre last night. In other words, he confided the not particularly exhilarating task of fitting his profitable and popular eccentricities into a play, to the clever, human and witty woman, known as Martha Morton. Let me say, at the very outset, that Miss Morton has equipped Mr. Russell more satisfactorily than any of her predecessors, and, whatever we may feel inclined to think about "A Bachelor's Romance" nobody can deny that it does not bag at Sol Smith Russell's knees.

Mr. Russell has had a grudge against New York. He has considered that this metropolis has treated him badly. He falls to reflect that to this enlightened city he has invariably brought the rubbish that makes money for him on the road. I should like to assure him that in New York—in this most despised and inartistic city—he will find his happiest moments, provided that he supply us with the material that we want—and make the play the thing. Nobody can see Mr. Russell without reveling in his artistic merit. He is a clear-cut artist, ready to do bright and entertaining things, but enslaved by the god of his own personality.

In "A Bachelor's Romance," as I said before, there is an improvement upon "A Bachelor's Romance" and "April Weather," and the other plays in which Mr. Russell has done the mandarin for so long. But the type is the same—the good, old, lovable fool, filled with senile humor, self-sacrifice and the dawn of a tardy love. There is no escape from it, but, thanks to Miss Morton, it is dish up more palatably than usual. There is not the least shadow of doubt but that Sol Smith Russell considers the character of David Holmes, literary critic, who falls in love with his seventeen-year-old ward Sylvia, and at the end of Act III, betrays her to another, in an amiable spirit of self-sacrifice, as a magnificent type. It gives him opportunity to do everything that he has done before, and to do them to the tune of Miss Morton's indorsement.

But David Holmes is not a very human person. He belongs absolutely to the stage, where old men are either approbrious rakes or equally approbrious angels. And somehow or other it is quite impossible to see the poetry of such a person's flickering passion for a young, pure and ignorant girl. But you say, it is exceedingly nice as a fantasy, and Miss Morton herself covers all this sort of reasoning by remarking that a page from real life is singularly unpleasant.

Worcester Festival.

Worcester, Mass., Sept. 20.—The fortieth annual Worcester Music Festival began with the first public rehearsal this afternoon, although the first concert will not be given until Tuesday evening. On Wednesday, Thursday and Friday concerts will be given in the afternoon and evening, making seven concerts in all.

Gounod's "Redemption" is the work assigned for the first evening. This has been given here but once. The soloists are Mme. Meredith, Miss Margaret Hall, Mrs. Bloodgood, George Hamlin, John Dempsey and George Holmes. William Lawin, Franz Kneisel and Mrs. Bloodgood are the artists for the second concert, which includes little that is new to festival patrons, excepting the first manuscript reading of Strube's Concerto, for violin and orchestra. On Wednesday evening Parker's "Horn Novelties" will be given its first production here, conducted by the composer, and with Mme. Gadsaki, Miss Stein H. Evans (Williams) and David Blum as the soloists.

"Waltz of New York" is the offering of the People's Theatre this week.

If you can like it as a fantasy, all very well and good, but I deny that it is served as a fantasy. David Holmes's senile love story is set forth as a slice of life, and it leaves a disagreeable taste. Now "The Professor's Love Story," which "A Bachelor's Romance" slightly resembled, was a fantasy pure and simple, and it was accepted as such.

However, it is merely a question of taste, as the old lady said when she embraced her cow. Mr. Russell is an artist, and he has a specialty. That specialty is alarmingly lovable old gentlemen, hungry to sacrifice themselves before the end of the play. And, dropping any criticism of the specialty itself, it must be said that nobody can do keener justice to such parts than Sol Smith Russell. There were twenty delicate little touches of "business" last night that would please any audience, and make Mr. Russell famous in any metropolis, were the touches in another atmosphere. Sol Smith Russell has the happy knack of blending humor with pathos. The first time I saw him, years ago, I raved over his performance. It seemed to me to be the acme of finesse. But I have seen him often since, doing the same thing, with other characters and circumstances around him, and it has occurred to me that I should like to see him in portly and less readily stellar roles.

"A Bachelor's Romance" has many of Martha Morton's pretty feminine fancies, but she was hampered by her star. She knew that a literary critic could not possibly be the harmless old fool that she was obliged to paint him. Even if he had criticized nobody but Laura Jean Libbey, she must have gained just a trifle more worldliness. And Sylvia—lovely, guileless Sylvia—from what locality could she have hailed? Even in the wilds of Hoboken you couldn't find a girl who would enter a Murray Hill drawing room and instantly stab a number of dudes with her shafts of repartee. The guileless maiden is always an enjoyable character on the stage, and if there is any woman on earth who can impress her with the stamp of verisimilitude it is Annie Russell. But Miss Russell, in her aggressive simplicity, was only able to lend her ineffable charm to the part. She could not imbue it with life.

Mr. Russell worked diligently. If he were indeed as agitated as he would have led us to believe, by his nearly felicitous speech, he certainly did not betray his emotion. He scored his laughs triumphantly, and he turned on his pathos with all due calculation. It is impossible not

Captured Nat Goodwin.

The cause of Nat Goodwin's preoccupied air as he joined waiting friends on the pier last Saturday on landing from the Britannic was explained yesterday. As the actor walked down the gangplank accompanied by Maxine Elliott, his leading lady, a process server slipped into his hand papers in two suits that have been hanging fire since Goodwin went to Australia, nearly two years ago. They were brought in the Supreme Court, one for \$500 royalties, alleged to be due Dorothy Johnson on "The Absent Boy," and the other for \$10,000 damages claimed by Albert M. Palmer, who charges Mr. Goodwin with misrepresenting the play named and presenting it at the wrong theatre. When the papers were served the actor started to get angry. "Oh, pshaw," said Miss Elliott, "you can stand it. You've been an 'Absent Boy' yourself for nearly two years."

Next week's important openings are: "The French Maid," at the Herald Square; "Maud Adams in 'The Little Minister,'" at the Empire; "The Belle of New York," at the Casino; "Faust," ballet, Cio de Mero and Paola del Monte at Koster & Bial's.

to like him. Mr. Russell has gifts that actors would sell their souls to possess, and I unhesitatingly affirm that these gifts are for New York rather than for the road. This star is too good for the road. If he succeeds there, as they say that he does, he balances matters by appearing in bad plays. Once we get him in a play worthy of his artistic ability, we shall not let him go. We shall keep him in our midst.

Annie Russell gave us another instance of the extraordinary faculty that she possesses for impersonating undogged maidens. Her work was delightful, as it always is. There never was a sweeter or a daintier actress, and the scenes with Mr. Russell in "A Bachelor's Romance" were admirable in their fidelity to nature. In fact, Miss Russell did everything she could for the part, and the fact that she was so particularly all rendered the senile love story all the more unattractive. May and December in unison is invariably freakish rather than poetic.

Miss Margaret Robinson deserves a large share of praise for her impersonation of a high-bred damsel, with beautiful clothes. She deserves it, and she shall have it. Miss Robinson gave us the atmosphere of drawing-rooms undiluted with Grand street, and we were thankful. It was a pretty little sketch, and not in the least overdone. I was amused at the new London accent that Miss Blanche Walsh displayed into New York. It was a good \$100 worth, fresh from the Strand. Why Miss Walsh imported it I don't know, for she was exceedingly nice as she used to be. Her diction reminded me very much of that owned by Virginia Hammet. Miss Panny Addison failed with her part of "a maiden lady with a sharp tongue," simply because her tongue wasn't sharp. She ruined the role. An admirable piece of character work was contributed by William Sampson, and one of minor merit by Alfred Hudson. William Seymour spoiled the role of an amorous literary man by playing it as though it were comic opera. Sydney Booth made a pleasant lover for Sylvia—much nicer and more apropos than the starling and Orin Johnson displayed his priceless teeth in his own inimitable way.

Mr. Russell's speech caused the audience to titter. In it he said that he had anesthetized New York, and was surprised to see that it was progressing so well. This sally was hugely enjoyed by Nat Goodwin, who chuckled for fully five minutes, and seemed to think it the best thing he had heard.

"Baroness" in Contempt.

Justice Russell, of the Supreme Court, yesterday, after listening to arguments, declared the Baroness guilty of contempt of court in persisting in using the name of her former husband, in spite of the prohibition of the court which divorced her. The complaint was made by Frederick N. Blank while the Baroness was singing at Olympia last summer. As she is now in Europe, the Supreme Court's judgment will not cause her any trouble for the present. Counsel for Frederick N. Blank declared that the Baroness' use of her client's name seriously injured his reputation. Counsel for the Baroness, however, denied this, claiming that their client created the name for stage purposes. But Justice Russell stood by the original decree, and when the former Mrs. Frederick N. Blank returns to America, she will have to attach her self-created title to some other man's name.

This is the last week of "Secret Service" at the Empire, of "The Girl from Paris" at the Herald Square, and of "Shall We Forgive Her" at the Fourteenth Street Theatre.

"The Cat and the Cherub," Chinese Drama at Olympia.

Hitherto the value of the Chinaman to the playwright has depended upon the picturesque Celestial method of sprinkling cloths. John, on the stage, has been the butt of such ridicule as makes the judicious grieve.

But there is a serious side of the Chinaman. He has a soul above fatuous, and can feel the deeper motions of the human heart. He is serious when among his intimates, and does not speak Pigeon English in the bosom of his family. These facts have first been utilized for dramatic purposes in America by Chester Bailey Fernald, who plays, "The Cat and the Cherub," was produced at Hammerstein's Olympia last evening. Mr. Fernald is known as a writer of stories about San Francisco's Chinatown, of which is has been a close student.

One of the things which he learned, he endeavored to teach New York last evening. The play is very instructive, perhaps, if it has a fault, it is too instructive. It is hard to learn so much about the Chinese in one lesson. Perhaps Mr. Fer-

between Wing Sun Ling and Ah Yoi, and by many clever and witty lines. But there is a lack of action in the earlier scenes, and the audience seemed to find them somewhat monotonous. The strength of the play is in its ending, and it was that which earned Mr. Fernald a generous and hearty call to the front. He appeared in the costume of one of the most humble characters, and made a speech full of embarrassment that could not hide his modesty and good sense. The piece was staged and costumed admirably.

As to the cast the honors go to Holbrook Blinn, who played the doctor with rare discretion, and to Richard Ganthony, who made the infamous Chin Gang a vivid reality. Miss Ruth Benson was a pretty Ah Yoi, and played the part well. Indeed the whole cast may be praised.

A play on somewhat similar lines by the same author, and entitled "The First Born," was recently put on at the Alcazar, in San Francisco, and made such a hit that all the New York managers were after it. Charles Frohman secured it, and Mr. Hammerstein was disappointed. It was this which led him to procure "The Cat and the Cherub." There were rumors that Mr. Frohman would prevent the representation by involving the old law against producing plays with movable scenery in a concert hall, but there was no sign of such interference last night.



nald and Mr. Hammerstein count upon that, expecting New Yorkers to come again and again till they know all. Perhaps Mr. Fernald and Mr. Hammerstein are right; the play was fairly well received—enthusiastically, indeed, as to the final climax, which is well wrought up, and was acted to admiration.

The story of the play is simple and comprehensive enough. Hoo King, a rich merchant of Chinatown, has a little son, Hoo Chee, and Hoo Chee has a pretty niece, Ah Yoi, who lives with him, and a villain neighbor, Chin Fang, who keeps an opium den.

Chin Fang kidnaps Hoo Chee, the Cherub, designing to hold him for ransom—a common crime in Chinatown. Wing Sun Ling, only son of the learned doctor, Wing Shee, comes near discovering the secret of the crime, and is murdered by Chin Fang. The doctor's father seeks out the crime and kills the villainous Chin Fang in a highly realistic manner—stunning him with a hatchet and then strangling him with the villain's own quene.

Now all this sounds rather gloomy, but it is relieved by pretty love making be-

Harriqan at Pastor's.

"Rum, riots and razors—the high roads to the cemetery." Of course that sentence comes from none but Harriqan—Harriqan of the uncouth humor, the rich dialect, the quaint pose that make his character study worthy any actor who observes humanity and strives to imitate some of its phases: worthy a Coquelin, worthy an Irving.

Mr. Wilson stepped on the stage last evening at the Broadway Theatre he was greeted by a salvo of applause. When he sat upon his mimic throne, surrounded by his vagabond comrades, and sang: "If I were only a king," the applause again burst forth, and the popular comedian was compelled to sing it over and over again, before the opera could proceed.

Mr. Wilson has had no more popular opera in which to display his peculiar talent than "Half a King." Harry B. Smith has evolved a new that suits him to a nicety, and Mr. Ludwig Engländer, in the music, goes, at no point, above Mr. Wilson's vocal capabilities. Besides this, "Half a King" has a comprehensive plot, and tells an interesting story that would have been acceptable without Mr. Engländer's charming music.

Miss Christie McDonald being succeeded by Miss Celeste Wynn as Lucinde—is surrounded by exactly the same company as when seen first at the Knickerbocker Theatre last year, the prima donna being Miss Lulu Glaser, whose part is quite as important as in Mr. Wilson's. In fact now as then, Miss Glaser shares honors with the comedian through the entire play, and last evening came in for quite as much praise as did he. The summer's rest, not alone on the principals but notably on the numerous chorists, was also noticeable, and made the revival of "Half a King" one of the best performances it has ever had.

The Broadway Theatre has undergone considerable renovation since last season, and has been neatly repainted and ornamented. Its regular patrons had a foretaste of these improvements in the festive manner of the entrances, which adds not a little to the attractiveness of Manager McCornick's playhouse.

"New Blood," Revived.

Denver, Col., Sept. 20.—The second stock company season at the Broadway Theatre opened to-night. The play, "New Blood," one of Augustus Thomas's productions, was received with marked enthusiasm by the large and critical audience. The new company, in which are Eugene Ormonde, Brazier Coulter, Mabel Elger and other well-known stage people, made a very favorable impression.

"Half a King" Back Again.

As Francis Wilson stepped on the stage last evening at the Broadway Theatre he was greeted by a salvo of applause. When he sat upon his mimic throne, surrounded by his vagabond comrades, and sang: "If I were only a king," the applause again burst forth, and the popular comedian was compelled to sing it over and over again, before the opera could proceed.

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"Nature's" New Exponent

"Nature" entered upon the fifth week of its career at the Academy of Music last night in the presence of an audience that filled the big auditorium. Lida McMillan, a young actress with a Junecoque figure and a deep-toned voice which admirably suited the part she plays, appeared for the first time in the title role, and very creditably. The Bonani Brothers, whose clever disappearing act has been a decided success, were the newcomers in the vaudeville contingent.

Morrison's production of "The Privateer" is the attraction at the Metropolitan Theatre.